

## Corey Woodby

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**From:** Ashley Lucas <lucasash@umich.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 12, 2016 5:26 PM  
**To:** Senate Majority Committee Clerks  
**Subject:** Vote NO on SB 1027

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to ask that you vote against SB 1027 as it is currently written with over-broad language that would exclude many of the 40,000 registered sex offenders in Michigan from too many activities to allow them to contribute to civic life in our state.

The most problematic part of the bill as it is currently written forbids 40,000 of our citizens from being able to work for or volunteer with any organization that works with individuals younger than 18 or who have been victims of sexual assault. Because people who have been victims of sexual assault are not always clearly identifiable, this would make enforcement of this law very difficult and would require many organizations to interrogate all of their employees and volunteers about their histories of sexual assault.

This bill would also make the work that I and many others do with former prisoners much more difficult. I direct a program called the Prison Creative Arts Project at the University of Michigan, which trains university students to facilitate arts workshops with currently and formerly incarcerated individuals. We do not ask our students whether or not they have been crime victims as they begin their curricular and volunteer work with us, nor do we ask folks with a criminal record about their crimes. All of our volunteer work is done under close supervision both by MDOC staff and by our faculty and staff at the university, and we have much evidence that in the twenty-six years of our work, we have had a significant positive (often life-changing) impact on students and folks in the criminal justice system alike.

This bill would severely limit our work with reentrants and change the nature of the safe spaces we create for folks coming home from prison to safely engage in creative expression without anyone in our community interrogating their past. This would effect both the reentrants who are registered sex offenders and those who are not because all of them would have to answer questions about whether or not they are registered--questions which reify existing negative hierarchies amongst folks with criminal records. Our very purpose as an organization serving reentrants is to welcome all of them without judgment and to help to encourage safe and respectful behavior with one another and with all of our students, staff, and volunteers.

Please reject this bill and help us to continue to do positive work.

Many thanks,

Dr. Ashley Lucas  
Director of the Prison Creative Arts Project  
Associate Professor of Theatre & Drama and the Residential College

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